

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

LEVEL
ONE

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JAPAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Evangelizing University Students

As a part of the strategy to cultivate Episcopal students in non-Christian universities and evangelize unreached students through the building of Christian student centers, a new Christian Student Center was dedicated in Sapporo, Hokkaido on November 23. Although the 250 "tsubo" building costing a total of ¥43,000 was built almost entirely with American funds, the Japanese church is going to try to raise the money for its running expenses.

This Center is designed to minister to the students of the government Hokkaido University. It has facilities for ten dormitory students and for student activities in the student hall. The co-executive secretaries will be Rev. W.D. Eddy and Prof. Hideaki Nakagawa who is also a professor of the University.

The locations of the next five projected Student Centers are Fukuoka, Sendai, Nagoya, Osaka and Tokyo. This strategy is an innovation since the usual plan is to put all available money for student evangelism into the Christian universities. The results of this strategy will be watched with interest by many.

Japanese Missionaries to Okinawa

Bishop Hinsuke Yashiro, presiding bishop in Japan, has just completed a trip to Okinawa where he ordained five priests for evangelism. One of them, Rev. Teruo Kimoto, was sent as a missionary from the Japan Episcopal church to work in a leper colony. Two were sent from Korea and two others were sent from Hawaii. Japanese Christians have a very natural feeling of responsibility to the many Japanese-speaking residents of this island which is now a protectorate of the United States of America.

Last year Bishop Nose' of the South Tokyo diocese went to Okinawa. As a result of his evangelistic zeal the whole island of Ezena decided to become a "Christian Island", and the town

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council voted to build a Christian chapel. This year, the Japan Episcopal Church is sending ¥300,000 for evangelistic work on Okinawa.

KYODAN SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THE GOSPEL SHIP (Fukuin Maru)

The children in the Sunday Schools of the United Church of Christ (Kyodan) will dedicate their Christmas offerings this year to go to the important evangelistic work of the Japan Inland Sea Mission.

Fifty years ago the Fukuin Maru was equipped and used to reach the children and people in the five hundred tiny islands scattered around the Inland Sea. Since ferries go to few of these islands, such a ship was the only way that the gospel could be carried. Shortly before the war, however, the work was discontinued and the ship was sold.

Three years ago the churches that had been started around the Inland Sea joined together to build a new Fukuin Maru, as a grateful tribute to the great work that had been done. Although the work that has been done by this ship in reaching the people through slides, puppets, kamishibai and sermons has been remarkably effective, the money required for the maintenance of the ship is almost prohibitive. 20,000 yen (more than a month's salary) is required to pay for the fuel alone of this ship of 18 tons, 52 feet and 10 foot beam. The ship is large enough to hold not only the pastor, the crew of two and the equipment for audio visual evangelism, it can also carry fifty to sixty children.

NEW HYMNAL PUBLISHED THIS MONTH

This Christmas season will mark the publication of a new Japanese Hymnal. Five years ago the Hymnal Commission was asked to make a study of the hymnal. After a year and a half they found that over a third of the hymns in the present hymnal (published 23 years ago) are rarely used either because they are too long, the tunes are not popular, or the words are too difficult. They concluded that a revised hymnal should be published.

The New Hymnal incorporates several notable innovations:

- 1) 155 of the old hymns have been removed because they were not being used by either the Japanese Church or the world Church. These have been replaced by 117 new hymns.
- 2) The trend has been to include more Japanese Christian Hymns.
- 3) Terminology which is archaic or has no meaning to the average Japanese has been replaced by words from the Japanese vernacular ("Shu" or Lord has replaced the term "Jehovah")

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4) Technical changes have been made such as: rematching words to fit the rhythm of the tunes, lowering the pitch of some "unsingable" hymns, and changing the system of phrasing the lines.

The most controversial aspect of the new publication which will stand in the way of its rapid adoption is that the Japanese words are printed across the page from left to right instead of the usual top to bottom system of the Japanese script. Rural and older people will find it difficult to adopt this new system. However, it is expected that the younger generation will gladly take to the new edition and will gradually bring about its adoption.

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR UNION

In the embattled years of post-war difficulties, the feeling of need for and the actual organization of the Japan Christian Endeavor Union gradually dwindled away. Recently, however, there has been a resurgent feeling of need for and appreciation of the spirit of social service and outreaching evangelism which characterized the old group.

On November 22-23 thirty five young people from fifteen churches in the Tokyo area met in a Christian Rededication Retreat centered around the topic "What Can We do for Christ and His Church". Out of this retreat was born not a new movement, organization, or committee, but renewed dedication in many hearts to return to their churches and work with increased zeal to make the church a real agency for evangelistic outreach and social service.

AVACO SHORT-WAVE BROADCAST SUCCESSFUL

The Monday through Friday fifteen minute program, "Stories of Hymns", which the NCC Audio-visual Aids Commission (AVACO) is producing for broadcast by short-wave, is evidently well-received by listeners. The Japan Shortwave Broadcasting Company has requested that the program, begun last October, be continued through March. In addition, they wish five more minutes added and Saturday and Sunday broadcasts produced. This time is given free and the broadcasting company pays a large share of the production cost. The format is now being reworked to incorporate five minute talks by Christian doctors, talks on literature, interviews, and perhaps, later, dramatic sketches.

This program is also being broadcast on two private stations and it is planned to make the programs, especially the three weeks Christmas hymn and carol series, available widely to regular channel stations.

The short wave station is supposed to reach Hawaii and the west coast of the United States where it can be heard by Japanese-speaking people.

LITERATURE COMMISSION OF THE N.C.C.

Annual Christian Literature Weeks

This fall for the second year there has been an intensified effort to emphasize the role that Christian Literature should play in Christian evangelism. Using the theme "More Good Religious Books in every Home" the Literature Commission displayed 10,000 posters in churches and schools all over Japan. Also two special meetings were held in Tokyo and Osaka.

In these meetings speakers emphasized the place of Christian literature in the home and family life by means of displays of available literature, through the distribution of samples, and by the free distribution of a recently printed catalogue of all the Christian Literature currently available in Japan.

Another kind of promotional campaign was carried out by Rev. Norimichi Ebizawa, Secretary of the NCC Literature Commission in the Island of Shikoku. There he traveled to five different centers to meet with pastors, church deacons, and Church School teachers, talking with them about methods of using Christian literature in the evangelistic outreach of the church.

Recent Publications

Here I Stand by Dr. Roland Bainton, trans. by Kishi & Aoyama, Pub. Lutheran Press, Tokyo ¥600. a readable translation aimed at high school graduates or above.

Short Life Stories of Religious Heroes thirty four stories compiled by Rev. T. Kanai, Pub. Jordan Sha, ¥300. Religious heroes since the Reformation including five Japanese Christians.

THE JAPAN BIBLE SOCIETY

The New Colloquial Translation of the Bible

Following the publication of the Colloquial New Testament last April (see JCAN of No. 37. page 3) the complete Bible will be ready for publication by the end of this coming March. Rev. Miyakoda, General Secretary of the Society, announced that April 15 will mark the celebration in Japan of both this new publication and the Third Golden Jubilee of the (international) United Bible Societies. Representative Christians from all over the world will be invited for this occasion.

Special Bible Distribution Campaign in Northern Kyushu

In Northern Kyushu this fall, six colporteurs and volunteer laymen an intensive house to house Bible distribution campaign. Special Bible exhibitions and lectures are being held as a part of this intensive campaign.

